Renewal of Covenant the great Duty incumbent on decaying or diſtreſſed CHURCHES.

A SERMON

Concerning Renewing of Covenant with God in Chriſt, Preached at *Dorcheſter* in *New-England*, the 21. Day of the 1. Moneth 1677. being a Day of

HUMILIATION

There, on that Occaſion.

By Increaſe Mather, Teacher of a Church in Boſton.

Deut. 29. 1. *Theſe are the words of the Covenant which the Lord commanded Moſes to make with the Children of Iſrael, in the Land of Moab, beſide the Covenant which he made with them in Horeb.*

Jer. 50. 5. *Come, let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord, in a perpetual Covenant that ſhall not be forgotten.*

Diſputare etiam poſſumus pro unione prædicta reformata, (h. e. *pro perſonali et explicita cum Deo et cum Eccleſia pactione*) ex ſolenni illa profeſſione Fidei, Fœderiſque perſonali pactione, quam in Reformatione ſua Nehemias &c. neceſſariam arbitrati ſunt. *Parker* de Polit. Eccleſ. Lib. 3 p. 172, 173.

In Veteri Teſtamento toties ferè legimus de renovatione Fœderis, quoties refertur ſolennis aliqua Eccleſiæ Reformatio. *Amef.* Med. Theol. L. 1. Cap. 32. Th. 16.

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TO THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN

DORCHESTER

Dearly Beloved in the Lord Jesus.

THere are (though none such that I know of amongst you) who have opposed the Doctrine of the *Church-covenant*, not only as to *Renewals* thereof, but they strike at the thing it self, denying it to be an Ordinance of Christ, or to have any Scripture foundation. (a) Those Eminent servants of God who were Instruments in the hand of Christ, of planting these Churches, have asserted and proved, not only that Covenanting is lawfull, but necessary and essentiall to the very Being of a Church. Albeit I doubt not but that you unto whom I am now speaking, are fully satisfied in the truth concerning this matter, yet it may be, it will not be altogether unprofitable (as tending to your further establishment in the present Truth) to remind you of the Arguments whereby that Principle of our way (and we trust the way of Christ) hath been confirmed, And they are such as these.

(a) *Mr. Cotton in his Book of the way. My Father in his printed discourse of the Church Covenant. Mr. Hooker in his survey of Church discipline. ch. 4. s. 6. 7. Mr. Norton in Respons. ad Apol. Cap. 2. The Platform of Discipline. Ch 4.*

1. It is clear, beyond dispute that the Church under the old-Testament was established by Covenant; and therfore the unchurching of the Iews is expressed by that of breaking their Covenant. Zach. 11. 9, 10, 14. 2. The Names which are given to the Church in Scripture bear witness to this Truth. It is called a *City*, Psal. 87. 3. Eph. 2. 9. Every City is united by Covenant; The Citizens are received into *Jus Civitatis*, into right of City priviledges: by some Covenant or Oath. Again, the Church is said to be Espoused to Christ, 2. Cor. 11. 2, And they that joyn to the Church are said to be married to the Church, Is. 62. 5. Now we know that marriage cannot be without Covenanting. 3. All Relations which are neither naturall nor

violent, but voluntary, are by vertue of some Covenant; Church Relation is voluntary; therefore the Covenant doth constitute men in such a Relation. 4. If a Church decayed is to be restored and reformed by Renewing their Covenant, then the Church is at first Erected thereby; For things are to be Reformed by reducing them to their first Institution. Math. 16.8. 1. Cor. 11. 23. Rev. 2. 5. But that the Church hath still been Reformed by Renewall of Covenant, the Scriptures do abundantly testify; How rarely do we read of a Church Reformation attained, but in this way? 5. Let the Inventory of all other Respects be brought in and considered, and it will be found that none of them constitute a Church. and therefore this of the Covenant only must. It is against reason to Imagine that meer Cohabitation should doe it; For then Infidels would be of the Church. Nor doth a meer external profession make a man a member of this or that Church; For then it would be impossible to excomunicate or cut off a corrupt member from such a body Politick, since it is not in the power of men to prevent any one from making a profession of the Gospel. Nor doth Baptisme constitute a member of the Church: For then, if a mans membership ceaseth by dissolution of the Church, Excommunication, dismission, his Baptisme, if the form of membership, would become a nullity. It remains then, that a particular Church is constituted by the Covenant, or agreement of Saints to walk with God, and one another, according to the Order of the Gospel.

It hath been objected by some, that the Doctrine of *Explicit Covenanting* doth unchurch all Christians but those of our way, such a practice not being known to the Christian World until the late *Separatists* began it. Unto all which, the old answer is sufficient, that although the more Explicit the Covenant is, the better: (*b*) there is much of the visible glory of Christ appearing in it; and certainly when men visibly, and Explicitly bind themselves and their Children to Christ, they cannot bind them to a better Master; nevertheless, Explicitness is only an Adjunct of the Covenant, therefore not Essentiall to the Being, though desireable as to the Order, and Well-being of a Church. Nor is it true that explicit Covenanting was not in use, except among those of the *Separation*; For (*c*) *Parker* and (*d*) *Zepperus* (who had reason to know it) declare that upon their personal knowledge, such Covenanting as we plead for, was practised in some of the reformed

(*b*) See Mr. Stone of the Catholick Church. p. 41. & Mr. Burroughs Irenicum. p 69, 70.

(*c*) de polit. Eccles. L 3 c. 16.

(*d*) de polit Eccles. L 1. p. 158. L. 3 p. 721.

formed Churches; Yea it were easy to produce (e) Decrees of Reforming Synods, determining that none should be received into their Churches, but in such a way; And therefore a late learned, and worthy (f) Professor in the University of *Leyden*, confesseth that those of the Congregational way are not to be blamed for their Doctrine about the Church Covenant; Also (g) *Comenius* testifieth, that such Explicit and solemn Covenanting as we plead for, was practised in those famous Churches in *Bohemia*. And it is famously known (h) that there was a Church of Christians so combined together in *England* in Queen *Maryes* dayes, all whose names were written down in a Book which that blessed Martyr *Cuthbert Sympson* (the Deacon of the Church) had by him, which Book was strangely preserved from falling into the hands of the adversaryes, by means of a redoubled dream of Mr. *Roughs*, the Pastor of that Church. And that great Reformer (i) *John Alasco* gathered a Church in London, who were conjoyned by explicit Covenant, in K. Edward the *6th*. his dayes. The Dutch Church now in London are the Posterity of that people. Furthermore, it is evident, from *Justin Martyrs* testimony (who lived in the very next age to the Apostles) that Christians in those dayes did explicitly Covenant. For he saith of them, ἀνεθήκαμεν ἑαυτοὺς τῷ Θεῷ &c. They were such as did give themselves to God, & did profess they believed that the things taught in the Gospel were true, and that they would for the future lead their lives according thereunto.

Others have objected, that we find nothing in the New-Testament concerning a *Church Covenant*. And suppose it were so indeed, Is the old Testament Apocrypha in these dayes? Its a solid Notion, that things abundantly insisted on in the Old Testament, and matters about which there was no occasion for controversie in the Apostles time, are sparingly mentioned in the New Testament. As therein much is not said concerning the Sanctification of the Sabbath, Nor express mention of the Baptisme of Infants, it was so plain and unquestionable a thing, that the Infants of Believers should have the initiating Seal of the Covenant applyed to them, that there was no need to insist expresly on a matter then, so clear & indisputable. And as for the *Church-Covenant*, there wants not New Testament proof for it. For some Scriptures in the old Testament which speak of it, refer to the days of the Gospel. So Isa. 56.6,7. & 44.5, & 62.5. Jer. 50.5. Ezek.

(e) *Parker ubi supra.*

(f) *Hornbeck in Epist ad Dereum p. 305 &c.*

(g) *In ordinis fratrum Bohem. Hist. r.*

(h) *See the Martyr Books, vol 3 p 864 & Clarks Examp vol 2 p. 604.*

(i) *Lege ejus de recta instituendarum Ecclesiarum ratione, Epistolas.*

(k) *In Apol. 2. p mihi 95.*

20 37. And in the New-Teſtament we read of the Churches being eſpouſed to Chriſt, and that *Church-Members* are *Fellow-Citizens*, and of their being in *Fellowſhip* together, & being *added* to the Church, all which expreſſions imply ſuch covenanting as is by us propugned and practiſed.

And if the thing it ſelf be warrantable, the *Renewall* of it is in caſe a duty. Nor can I think of any momentous objection againſt it; Iknow ſome are ſcrupulous (and it is good to be of a tender Conſcience) leſt men be not duly prepared for a Renewall of Covenant, and will not keep their Ingagements, and ſo greater Judgment follow; But it may be Replyed, 1. This ſtriketh at all Explicit Covenanting; yea by this Argument we muſt have no days of Humiliation, no coming to Sacraments, becauſe if profeſſors be formal in theſe things, they break the third Commandment, and the Lord will not hold them guiltleſs. 2. Our Churches are (through grace) as well prepared for this duty as the Children of Iſrael were ſometimes when they Renewed their Covenant, & a bleſſing followed. 3. If only an Externall *Reformation* ſhould be attained therby that may prevent outward Judgements. 4 A number of living Chriſtians will be ſincere in what they do, & ſo bring down a bleſſing upon others as well as themſelves. Chriſt ſometimes judgeth of his Churches by the Gold that He ſeeth in them If a few Golden ſincere members in a Church Renew, and keep their Covenant with God; the Societyes and Towns, whereto they belong, ſhall fare the better for them. In a word a Chriſtian ſhould not be like him that *Luther* ſpeaketh of, who becauſe he made many promiſes to God, that he would ſerve him in newneſs of life, and yet kept them not, therefore reſolved to live at a looſe end, and never ingage himſelf to God any more. Only a work of this nature ſhould be done not in our own ſtrength, but humbly depending upon Chriſt, and with all poſſible ſeriouſneſs, ſince it is a moſt dreadfull thing to tranſact perſonally with the holy, and infinitely glorious Majeſty of heaven and earth.

And now (my Brethren) as for the publication of this Sermon, it was your concurrent deſires that prevailed with me to conſent unto it. And I muſt confeſs that I have peculiar reaſon to be willing to ſerve you in any thing wherein I may, for I was once an unworthy Member of your Church, and my firſt publick Labours in the Miniſtry (now twenty years agoe) were beſtowed amongſt you; You were my Fathers Flock, and (I ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe) the greateſt part of you now living, the Seals of his Miniſtry, who ſerved Chriſt amongſt you for the ſpace of thirty three years and more without ceaſing. You have alſo manifeſted your willingneſs (before his death & ſince alſo) that I (however unworthy) ſhould have been my Fathers Succeſſor. Your undeſerved love wherein I ſhall whilſt I live acknowledge, & bear a gratefull Remembrance of. And I bleſs God, who hath provided another, a faithfull Paſtor for you, and long may he continue as a Bleſſing among you, and over you in the Lord. If this, or any other weak endeavour of mine, may be a means to promote your ſpiritual Edification, I ſhall have cauſe to rejoyce. Yet I think I ſhould hardly have given way to this publication, had not ſome Judicious and worthy Perſons, conceived that it might (if the Bleſſing of Chriſt goe along with it) tend to promote the holy work, by you lately and ſolemnly (and I hope ſincerely) attended, in other Congregations alſo. And who knoweth how far your Example may provoke others to a godly emulation? The Lord help us to be in earneſt in the matter of *Reformation*, and therefore to attend all means which God hath ſanctified to the attainment of that end, *in this New-Englands day*, leſt greater Fires be kindled, and more Candleſticks removed out of their places, and then it be too late to prevent thoſe evills which as yet may poſſibly be diverted.

I ſhall add no more at preſent, only that I do (not in a Complemental way, but earneſtly) deſire the help of your prayers that I may be enabled to fulfill the Miniſtry which I have received of the Lord, and finiſh my courſe with joy. So beſeeching the Grace of the Lord Jeſus to be with you, I reſt,

Yours in the Lord always,

Increaſe Mather.

BOSTON,
2nd. of 3. Month,
1677.

Neh. 9. 38. *And becauſe of all this we make a ſure Covenant.*

THis Book of *Nehemiah* is Hiſtorical, amongſt other things we have an account of what was done by the Jews (in thoſe dayes the only Church of God upon earth) after they were delivered from the Heathen Nations, who had ſorely waſted and deſtroyed them, in order to a *Reformation* of thoſe evills that had provoked the Lord againſt them. There are two things mentioned that way in this and in the following Chapters. 1. They kept a day of ſolemn Humiliation by faſting and Prayer: the time when this day was obſerved is expreſſed in the firſt Verſe of this Chapter, *Now in the twenty and fourth day of the moneth, the Children of Iſrael were aſſembled with Faſting and with Sackcloths*, and the manner how the day was obſerved, and the time ſpent is expreſſed in the third verſe, namely in hearing the word and in Prayer: *They read in the Book of the Law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confeſſed.* In their *Confeſſions* they doe, 1. Acknowledge the Lords great goodneſs to them and to their Fathers, in that he called Abraham and eſtabliſhed a Covenant with him and his ſeed after him in their Generations, and brought them out of Egypt, wonderfully preſerved them in the Wilderneſs, ſetled them in the land of Canaan, and there ſaved them many a time. The greateſt part of this Chapter is taken up in acknowledgments of this nature. 2. They confeſs their own ingratitude and unworthy walkings before the Lord, *v.* 34. 35. 3. They confeſs that they were under ſolemn Rebukes of Providence, *v.* 36. 37. 4. They likewiſe confeſs that God was juſt in all that evill that was come upon them, *v.* 33. *Howbeit thou art juſt in all that is brought upon us, for thou haſt done right, but we have done wickedly.*

2. We have the Relation of another thing done in order to *Reformation*, viz. a ſolemn Renewal of their Covenant, which was a conſequent of their Confeſſions and Humiliations before the Lord. And of this we have an account in the next, as alſo in the laſt verſe of this Chapter, with which ſome begin the Chapter following, (*a*) theſe words having a connection with the things related therein.

(*a*) *ſic* Junius, Pulcator *et alii.*

In this verſe we have 1. the duty performed, *ſc. the making of a ſure Covenant. We make*] Hebr. כָּרְתִים we ſtrike a Covenant. The word originally cometh from a root that ſignifieth to cut or kill, becauſe it was the manner (*b*) of old in confirming Covenants, to kill ſome creature or other; by which Rite they intimated that God ſhould ſtrike and kill and cut in pieces him that did not make conſcience to keep the Covenant. *A ſure Covenant*] the Hebrew word אֱמֻנָה which is here uſed ſignifieth *Fidelity*. It is as much as if it were ſaid, we plight our Troth unto the Lord. *Sept.* πιστὶν διαθήκην we engage our Faith upon it, that we will obſerve what we have promiſed, and walk more cloſely with God for the time to come, then we have done in the dayes that are paſt & gone. 2. We have the Form or manner of proceeding in this Ingagement, it was done by writing. They did bind themſelves to the Lord, not only by their words, but with their hands, that ſo they might be ſure to be faſt bound unto him. And becauſe the Congregation was very great & numerous, & no doubt many amongſt them too that were not able to write, therefore their Rulers and chief men ſubſcribed in the name of all the reſt.

(*b*) *Stabant et cæſa firmabant Fœdera porca.* Vir. Ænead 8.

(*c*) v. *Wolphium in Neh.* 9. *Fœdus Fidelitatis, i. e. de ſervanda fidelitate cum Deo* Vatablus *in Loc.*

I ſhall only ſpeak to the duty at preſent: we know that this people was in Covenant with God before this day of Faſt was kept, and therefore the making of a Covenant here ſpoken of, intends only a Solemn renewal thereof.

The Doctrine therefore before us, is, *That there are times wherein ſolemn Renewal of Covenant is a duty incumbent on the People of God.* Now for the clearing of this Doctrine, there are four things that may be briefly enquired into. 1. What is implyed in making a Covenant with God. 2. How it doth appear that renewal of Covenant is a duty. 3. When the Lords people ought to renew their Covenant. 4. The Reaſons why they ſhould do ſo.

Q. 1.

Q. 1. *What is implyed in making a Covenant with God?*

A. 1. It Implyes *a chooſing the Lord the only true God in Jeſus Chriſt to be our God.* Pſal. 48.14. *For this God is our God for ever and ever.* This is *Covenanting*, even a making an everlaſting Choice of God. Hence it is expreſſed by that of *Cleaving* to the Lord. Joſh.23.8. *but cleave unto the Lord your God*, *i.e.* chooſe him and him only and for ever as your God. The Subſtance, Soul and Life of the Covenant is in this. As the Sum of the Covenant on the Lords part is expreſſed by that of his being *the God of his people*, Jer.31.33. *I will be their God and they ſhall be my people.* An expreſſion which is uſed (as ſome obſerve) at leaſt fifteen times in the Scripture, to expreſs the Covenant: ſo the ſubſtance of the Covenant on our part is comprehended in that of *taking the Lord to bee our God.* And this is done inwardly when the heart is given up to God, when their is an entire reſignation of a mans ſoul and ſelf unto God in Jeſus Chriſt. 2. Cor. 8.5. *They gave their own ſelves to the Lord.* Or outwardly and viſibly, *i.e.* when men do profeſs before all the world that they are and would be the Lords Servants. Hence, when the Lords people did ſolemnly renew their Covenant in Joſhuahs time, he ſaid to them, *you are witneſſes that you have choſen the Lord to ſerve him.* Joſh.24.22. that was their open profeſſion and declaration that they were the Lords ſervants. It is therefore expreſſed by that of *avouching* the Lord. Deut. 26.17. *Thou haſt avouched the Lord to be thy God this day.* So thou haſt ſaid, (*d*) ſo thou haſt ſolemnly profeſſed. Alſo, Covenanting with God in the dayes of the New-Teſtament is noted by expreſſions importing the ſame thing, Iſai.44. 5. (a Scripture that doth relate to Goſpel times) *one ſhall ſay I am the Lords, and another ſhall call himſelf by the Name of Jacob, and another ſhall ſubſcribe with his hand to the Lord, and ſurname himſelf by the name of Iſrael.* How ſubſcribe with his hand? what is the meaning of that? It is (*e*) as much as if it were ſaid, he ſhall be the Lords Volunteer, as a Souldier that cometh, and with his own hand liſts himſelf under ſuch a Commander, openly declaring that he will live and dye in the ſervice of ſuch a General. Hence alſo Chriſtians by reaſon of their Covenant are ſaid to have the Name of God written in their foreheads. Rev. 14.1. It was an antient Cuſtome, that (*f*) ſouldiers had their Generals Name or brand marked on their hands, and (*g*) ſervants had their Maſters Name marked

(*d*) Hebr. הֶאֱמַרְתָּ *profeſſus es quod ſit tibi in Deum* Lud. de Di. *Jovam promuntiatis vobis eſſe Deum.* Caſtellio

(*e*) *Engliſh Annot.*

(*f*) Vegetius *l.* 2.5.

(*g*) Rodiginus *l.*5.33.

on their foreheads, whereby it was manifeſt before the world, whoſe ſervants they were, in alluſion to that, the Loods Covenant people are in the *Revelation*, ſaid to have the Name of God, and the Name of Chriſt on their foreheads, *i.e.* they are ſuch as do openly in the ſight of heaven & earth profeſs that they are his Servants and Subjects. Therefore,

2. *This making a Covenant, doth imply a profeſſed ſubjection to the revealed will of God.* As amongſt men, there being a Covenant between Maſter and Servant, the Servant is bound to obey the Maſter, and to fullfill his will, ſo a Covenant People have promiſed ſubmiſſion to the will of God. They are bound to own and ſubject unto the holy wayes of God. Inaſmuch as the Children of Iſrael had avouched the Lord to be their God, therefore they were under obligation, *to walk in his wayes, and to keep his Statutes, and his Commandments, and his Judgments, & to hearken to his voice.* Deut. 26. 17. Yea indeed, ſuch a people, are bound abſolutely to ſubject to the will of God, ſo as to obey him not only in ſome things but in every thing that he ſhall ſee good to enjoyn upon them. This we ſee in the Context, when this people renewed their Covenant, they promiſed ſaying, *we will obſerve & doe all the Commandments of the Lord our Lord.* Neh 10. 29. And we read of the Corinthians that after they became a Covenant People, they did profeſſedly ſubject themſelves to the Goſpel. 2 Cor 9. 13. *your profeſſed ſubjection to the Goſpel of Chriſt* They ſubjected themſelves to the Doctrine of the Goſpel, to the order of the Goſpel & to all the holy rules of the Goſpel (*h*) One Duty much commended and required in the Goſpel is Charity and Beneficence towards needy Saints, & the Corinthians by reaſon of their Covenant were profeſſedly ingaged to that Duty, and by their practice they owned before all the world their Profeſſion and ingagement in that reſpect.

(*h*) v. Belgick Annot.

3. *This Covenanting which the text ſpeaketh of, doth imply a renouncing of thoſe things which are inconſiſtent with the ſervice of God.* e. g. The love of the world is inconſiſtent with the ſervice of God. Mat. 6. 24. *Ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon.* They then that have covenanted to be the Lords Servants, are under ingagement, (that whatever they have been in former times) they will be Lovers of the world no longer. Again, the Service of Sin is inconſiſtent with the Service of God; and thence they that make a Covenant with the Lord, doe ingage that they will not

ſerve

serve sin any longer. Wherefore Joshuah said unto the people when they were about to renew their Covenant. *you cannot serve the Lord, for he is an holy God.* meaning that they could not serve him & keep their sins and Idols too. Josh.24.19. And Christians in the primitive times, when they did enter into Covenant with God, they (i) did expresly declare their renunciation of Sin, Satan and the World. When the Question was solemnly put to them, *Abrenuncias?* dost thou reuounce the enemies of Christ, and of thy Souls Salvation? They would answer again, *spondeo et abrenuntio*, I utterly renounce them all, and promise to serve not them but Christ.(k) The like custom to this hath been solemnly observed in some of the reformed Churches. And we see in this Context, that when these Israelites renewed their Covenant, they promised to forsake such and such sins, as afterwards we shall hear more fully. In a word, such Doctrines as are inconsistent with Truth in Religion, and such practices as cannot stand with Power of Godliness, a people that renew their Covenant are bound to renounce them. We come then to the second Enquiry, *viz*,

(i) *videat cui vacat* Clement Const *a post.* C.18.P.253.

(k) *in Bohemia v. Ration. ordin et disciplin. fratr Bohem.* p 46.

Q. 2. *How it doth appear that it is not enough for men to make a Covenant with the Lord, but that solemn renewal of Covenant is sometimes a Duty?*

A. We shall mention three Arguments, all of them evincing the Truth of the Doctrine before us. 1. *It is evident that renewal of Covenant is a Duty, in that men ought frequently to worship God.* Whenever God is worshipped the Covenant is renewed implicitly. No man doth at any time worship *Jehovah*, but he doth therein and thereby avouch the Lord to be his God, inasmuch as that which we worship we own to be God, and our God also. And hence is that expression, Psal.50.5. *My Saints that have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice*, because as often as the Lords people did offer Sacrifice to the Lord, they did by that act of Religious Worship, renew and confirm their Covenant with him. (l) Sacrificing was of old a fœderal Rite. So, when the Lords people sanctifie a Sabbath to the honour of his Name, they do by that virtually renew their Covenant. Ezek.20.20. *Hallow my Sabbaths, and they shall be a Sign between me and you, that you may know that I am the Lord your God.* Due observation of the Sabbath, is one Sign of a Covenant people. When men doe religiously observe the Christian Sabbath, they acknowledge them-

(l) *M des works* p 247.

themselves to be under the New Covenant, even the Covenant of Grace, as under its new and last and best way of Administration, and that Jesus Christ is their Lord and Saviour. Yea whenever Christians pray unto God in Christ, especially when they Fast and Pray, the Covenant is renewed: for then they profess that God in Jesus Christ is the object of their Faith, and implicitly (at least) promise to endeavour a Reformation of the sins which they confess and beg the pardon of. Inasmuch then as dutyes of divine worship ought frequently to be attended, it is not enough for men once to enter into Covenant, but there must be a renewal of that Covenant.

2, *The Truth is further evident, in that the Lord hath appointed Seals of his Covenant.* Under the old Testament the Covenant was sealed by circumcision and the Passover: and we know that Baptisme and the Lords Supper are the Seals of the New-Testament; and therefore they are commonly called *Sacraments*, Which word doth import the highest engagement that may be, yea an *Oath of Fidelity*. It is (m) a military word: For Souldiers in former times were wont to take an Oath of Fidelity to their General, and this they called the *Sacrament*. They would say one to another, *have you taken the Sacrament?* meaning, have you yet taken the Oath of Allegiance to your General, that you will be faithfull unto him to the Death? So they that are subjects of either of the Sacraments appointed under the New-Testament, are under an Oath of Fidelity unto Christ. By Baptism Christians make a sure Covenant with the Lord. Hence they are said to be baptised (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα (n) *in Nomen*) Into *the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost* Math. 28.19. Because the Baptised person is bound to approve himself as becometh a Servant of that God who is Father, Son and Spirit, and Baptisme is said to be *into the Name of the Lord Jesus*, Act.19.5. inasmuch as the party baptised is under solemn ingagement to submit to the Name and Authority of the Lord Jesus in all things. When a Father (or Mother) presents his child to Baptisme, the Covenant is not only then sealed to the Child, but confirmed with the Parent, Yea he by bringing his child to Baptisme, doth renew his taking hold of that Covenant, wherein the Lord hath said, *I will be a God to thee and to thy Seed.* Also, In the Lords Supper the Covenant is renewed both on the Lords part and on ours. Christ therefore when he did institute that Ordi-

m Synops. Relig. purior. ubi de Cœnâ Domini.

(n) Beza.

Ordinance of the Supper, ſaid, *this Cup is the New-Teſtament in my blood which is ſhed for you*, Luk. 22.20. *h.e.* the wine in the cup doth ſignifie the Blood of Chriſt, whereby the Lord doth confirm the new Covenant with the Believer, and the Believer doth by drinking of that cup, anew take hold of his intereſt in the Covenant of Grace, and promiſe to walk before the Lord according to the terms of the Covenant. Now this Ordinance of the Supper ought frequently to be attended. 1. Cor. 11.26. *As often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup.* So that it is an Ordinance which Chriſtians ought often to worſhip the Lord in. Some of the Antients, doe expreſly teſtifie that the Lords Supper was in thoſe primitive times obſerved every Lords day, and the Scripture (in the Acts of the Apoſtles) doth intimate no leſs. However it ought to be often adminiſtred, albeit there is no ſtated Rule determining juſt how often, and therefore the Covenant is often to be renewed. *Juſtin Martyr, and Tertullian.*

3. *The Lords people ought to renew their Faith and Repentance*, and that implyeth a renewal of Covenant. When a Sinner is truly converted, then is he ſavingly brought into Covenant with God in Chriſt. They that pretend to Converſion, Faith, & Repentance, are viſibly in Covenant with the Lord, and they that are really converted, are everlaſtingly in Covenant even *betrothed to the Lord for ever.* Now there are renewed Converſions which the Lords own children may ſtand in need of, eſpecially in caſe of any great iniquity committed againſt the Lord, or ſpecial Corruption breaking forth. Hence David after his lamentable Fall, in that matter about Uriah the Hittite, prayed as in Pſal. 51. 10. *Create in me a clean heart O God and RENEW a right ſpirit within me.* He ſaw that he ſtood in need of going over the work of Converſion again, and ſo of *Renewing* his cloſure and covenant with God in Jeſus Chriſt. And it was ſaid to Peter, *when thou art converted*, h.e. when thou ſhalt have renewed thy turning to the Lord. Thou (ſaith Chriſt) wilt break thy Covenant & Promiſe. Thou haſt promiſed to ſtand by me thy Maſter whatever come of it; but Temptation will be too hard for thee, and then thou muſt renew thy Faith and Repentance. Luk. 22.32. Yea it was ſaid to all the Diſciples of Chriſt, *except you be converted*, Mat. 18.3. intimating that there was a neceſſity of their being converted anew from a particular Corruption, which was at that time too prevalent in them. Moreover the Lord Jeſus doth

call

call upon the Churches in Asia to repent, as we see in the 2d. & 3d. Chapters of the Revelation. They had repented before Christ sent those Epistles from heaven to awaken them, yet the Lord would have them to renew their Repentance, and that implyeth that renewal of Covenant, which I am now speaking of. But the truth in answer to this enquiry will appear more fully in speaking to the third particular proposed, viz,

3. *When the Lords People ought to renew their Covenant?*

Ans. I shall only speak concerning those more solemn and extraordinary renewals of Covenant, which the Text hath especial reference unto. For I delight to keep as close as may be to the subject I have in hand. This then of a more solemn Renewal of Covenant is a Duty in two cases especially, both which are notified in the Context.

1. *In case of eminent danger and distress,* So here this Church and Congregation of the Israelites having said *we are in great distress,* it is added, *and becauseof all this, we make a sure Covenant.* The truth is that the very dictates of natural Conscience, direct men to renew their Vows and Covenants with God at such times. And instances are not rare in the Scripture confirming this. When Jacob was to remove from his Fathers house, that was an hazardous undertaking, wherefore, he *vowed a Vow saying, if God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I goe, so that I come again unto my Fathers house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God.* thus did he renew his Covenant. Gen.28.20,21. And *Jepthah,* when he was greatly distressed by reason of the Heathen who made an unjust Warr upon him, that put him upon solemn vowing to the Lord, and so renewing his Covenant in that way, Judg.11.30. Likewise the children of Israel, while yet in the Wilderness, when some of the Heathen that lived in the southern parts, fought against them and took some of them Prisoners, they vowed a Vow to the Lord, Numb. 21.1,2. Yet more, when the first Generation of those that came out of Egypt were dead, and another Generation risen up, who were called of God to ingage in Warr against the Heathen Nations round about, Moses put them upon renewing their Covenant, Deut. 29.1. *These are the words of the Covenant, which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the Land of Moab, beside the Covenant which he made with them in Horeb.* Which sheweth that that only was a re-

newal

was only a renewal of the Covenant. It was neceſſary that the new Generation ſhould come under the bond of a renewed Covenant.

2. *In caſe of Apoſtacy from God, Renewal of Covenant is a Duty.* Thus alſo in the Context: they confeſs that ſuch and ſuch departures from the Lord were to be charged upon them, *and becauſe of this they made a ſure Covenant*, eſpecially if there be any notable defection and degeneracy among a profeſſing people, their great duty is to make haſte to recover themſelves by a ſolemn and ſincere renewal of their Covenant with God in Jeſus Chriſt. If there be corruption in Worſhip, then this duty ought to be attended. So in Aſa's time, 2 Chron. 15. 12. And in Jehoſaphat's time. Chap 23. *v.* 16. And in the dayes of Hezekiah and Joſiah. *Chron.* 29. 8. and 34. 31. Or if there be corruption in manners, though there ſhould be a purity as to external Worſhip, this renewing of Covenant with God is then alſo a duty. It is a great miſtake to think that the Lords people of old never renewed their Covenant except they were fallen to Idolatry: For the Jews were not Idolaters after the Captivity, therefore the Phariſees could ſay, *we are not born of Fornication*, meaning, they were not Idolaters; and ſo not guilty of ſpiritual adultery, Joh. 8. 41. Yet after the Captivity they renewed their Covenant with God from time to time. So Neh. 10. And again in the 5*th*. Chap. *v.* 12, 13. Alſo in Chap. 13. *v.* 25. And in Ezra 10.; There were ſcandalous evills amongſt them in reſpect of tranſgreſſions againſt the 2*d*. Table, and therefore they did, (as was in ſuch caſe their duty) ſolemnly renew their Covenant. Now theſe things are written for our inſtruction, upon whom the ends of the World are come, 1 Cor. 10. 11. As the judgments which befell the Jews of old were recorded for our Admonition, ſo the courſe which they did (according to God) obſerve for the removal or diverting Judgment, is recorded for our imitation; and in ſpecial is it true concerning this renewing of Covenant, which the Text ſpeaketh of.

Q. But why ſhould this be?

Anſ. I ſhall mention but one *Reaſon* of the Doctrine, and that is, *becauſe of the Glory which doth come to God hereby*. The Lord Jehovah looketh upon himſelf as honoured, when his Creatures doe own him and ſubmit unto him as God, and therefore when this ſubmiſſion is in the moſt ſolemn manner renewed,

it tends exceedingly to the glory of the Name of God. Moreover this renewal of Covenant with God through Jesus Christ is the great Scripture expedient, in order to the accomplishing of Reformation among a profeſſing people. Search the Scriptures, and you will ſtill find, that when any notable reformation was effected in the Church, it was in this way attained. And therefore *Piſcator* (p) upon this Text hath a good obſervation. *Here* (ſaith he) *is an Example touching renewal of Covenant, which Churches ought to imitate when they deſire to carry on the work of Reformation.* Again, this is the way to prevent much Sin & diſhonour to the Name of God. & that ſeems (q) to be the ſpecial Reaſon why the Covenant was renewed not long before Joſhuahs Death. Whatever private or particular tranſgreſſions there might be, we know not; but it is evident that there was no publick or general defection till after Joſhuahs dayes; for it is teſtified, *that the people ſerved the Lord all the dayes of Joſhuah, and of the Elders that outlived Joſhuah.* Judg. 2.7. Therefore in his dying Exhortation he ſaid unto them, *cleave unto the Lord your God, as you have done unto this day.* Joſh. 23.8. Why then did he put them upon renewing their Covenant? Even that ſo they might be ingaged againſt ſin and Apoſtacy from God for the future. Hence it is ſaid, Ch. 24.25. *Joſhuah made a Covenant with the People that day, and ſet them a Statute and an Ordinance in Shechem*, that is to ſay, he did ratifie it as a ſtanding perpetual Ordinance to them and to their poſterity, ſo that Joſhuahs deſign was by a Covenant for the future, to reſtrain them from Idolatry and Apoſtacy. As for thoſe that are ſincere, and truly Conſcientious, ſuch a renewal of Covenant as I am ſpeaking of, will ingage them to a more cloſe walking with God. And others that it may be are not gone beyond a legal work, ſuch a Covenant will be an awe upon Conſcience, ſo as to prevent the Commiſſion of many a Sin. They that have any Conſcience in them, will be afraid to ſin when under ſuch ſolemn ingagements to the contrary. So then it doth in more reſpects then one, tend to the honour of God, & therefore his People ought to renew their Covenant.

(p) *In Populo Judaico renovante Fœdus tum Deo propoſitum illuſtre exemplum pietatis, quod exemplum imitari decet eccleſias, quam in eis inſtitutur Reformatio.* Piſcator *obſerv. in* Neh. 10.

(q) *See the* Engliſh Annot. *Sibi veriſimile non eſſi poſt (eadem Achaz, auſos fuiſſe ſe manifeſtis Sacrilegiis pollucre. Ad affectum refero; nam et hæc tendit particula; et inclinant Cor ad Dominum. Calvin in Joſh* 24. 23. *Simili modo Auguſtinus interpretatur.*

USE I.

USE, 1. Here is matter of ſad Conviction and Reproof. And there are eſpecially three ſorts that do fall under juſt Reproof from this Doctrine. 1. *They that do not enter into Covenant with God*; who are ſo far from renewing, that they doe not ſo much as *ſtrike a Covenant* with the Lord. Some there are that doe not viſibly take hold on the Covenant; however not in that explicit manner which is to be deſired: of this ſort are they that can content themſelves to live without Church fellowſhip, which is a (r) great ſin and provocation to the Lord. For breaches of the ſecond Commandment doe provoke the Lord to Jealouſie. Now to neglect divine Inſtitutions, ſuch as Baptiſme and the Lords Supper, and Church fellowſhip in order thereunto, is to be guilty of breaking that Commandment; and God doth many times puniſh the neglect of his own *Inſtitutions*, with as great ſeverity as he doth plague for the practice of humane inventions in the things of God. It may well be thought that this is one ſpecial tranſgreſſion, which hath provoked the bleſſed God to let looſe the Heathen againſt thoſe that doe profeſs his Name in this Land. It is a very ſad thing that there ſhould be found in the midſt of thee O New-England, whole *P*lantations of men that will call themſelves Chriſtians, and yet have lived all their dayes like heathen, without any Sacraments or inſtituted Worſhip of God. Woſull to be ſpoken! many have been born in New-England that never ſaw a child baptized in their lives, and that know not what the Lords Supper meaneth. Yea amongſt our ſelves many that content themſelves to live in a careleſs neglect of that Ordinance, not being conſcientious in endeavours to prepare themſelves for, and in an orderly way to come to the enjoyment of that bleſſed Ordinance. Our Fathers came into this Wilderneſs on purpoſe that ſo they might build an houſe for God, and walk with him in all his holy Inſtitutions; and therefore there are none in the World, in whom neglects of that kind are ſo evill and provoking to the moſt High, as in the Children of ſuch Fathers. Others there are that doe not inwardly and ſincerely enter into Covenant with God. And that is true concerning all unconverted Sinners, all that are in a natural irregenerate eſtate. The natural man is a Servant to ſin and Satan, and not to God.

(r) *Graviſſimè peccant, qui occaſionem habent ſeſe Eccleſiæ adjungendi et eam negligunt. Et ſi obſtinatè perſiſtant in ipſa incuria, quicquid alias profitentur, vix haberi poſſunt pro fidelibus, Regnum Dei vere quærentibus.* Amef. *Med. Theol.* l. 1 *C.* 32. *Th* 28.

He cannot say (as the Church speaks Lament. 3. 26.) *the Lord is my portion saith my soul.* His heart chuseth something else, and not the Lord for his Portion. Though such is the exceeding riches of the grace of God, as that he offereth himself as God to every soul where the Gospel is preached, the grace of God which bringeth Salvation hath appeared to all men; the Lord in the Gospel saith to every sinner, if thou wilt forsake all other lords and lovers, and give up thy heart to me, and become my servant for ever, I will be thy God, yet the sinner preferreth something else above God. Either his pleasure is his God, or the world is his God. As the holy Apostle did bewail it with tears, that there was a Generation of men in the World that called themselves Christians, and yet *their God is their Belly, who mind earthly things, whose end will be destruction.* Phil. 3. 19. And Alas! What good will the external Covenant doe to a man, as to the everlasting Salvation of his Soul, if he be not sincere therein. Was not Dives a son of Abraham, and yet damned in Hell fire? Nay this, except there be a work of Conversion and Regeneration, will aggravate eternal Condemnation at the last day. Therefore the Lord Jesus hath said, *the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into utter darkness*, Math. 8. 12. They that are of the visible Church, and so under the bond of the Covenant, and yet in a state of Hypocrisie, so living, so dying, darkness and utter darkness will be their portion for ever.

2. *This reproveth those also that are backward to renew their Covenant with the Lord.* There hath been too great a backwardness unto that in these Churches generally. It is a work that should have been done before now, and then it may be, much of that dolefull Judgment and misery which hath filled the Land, would have been prevented: possibly we had not seen so many Candlesticks stand shaking, yea and some removed out of their places, if this work had been duly attended a few years agoe. And it is for a Lamentation, that such backwardness is found amongst *the Children of the Covenant* to a duty of this nature. Some of them that are ready to refuse and disown the Covenant, and so the God of their Fathers. They will not subject themselves to the Goverment of Christ amongst his people. A Sin that is wont to be attended with heavy Desolation. Remember those words of Christ, Math. 23. 37. 38. *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, I would have gathered thy Children, as an hen gathereth her chickens*

chickens under her wings, and ye would not, behold your house is left unto you desolate. When the Children of Jerusalem will not come under the wing of the Government of the Lord Jesus, it is not wont to be long before their house is left unto them desolate. Truly, such are like unto profane Esau, that car'd not what became of his Birthright. And this is set as an eternal Brand upon that profane Covenant dispiser, that he said, *and what profit shall this Birthright doe unto me?* and *thus Esau despised his Birthright.* Others there are, that although they do not positively refuse to submit themselves to the Lord Jesus, yet are loth publickly to own & avouch him to be their God. Sinfull bashfulness maketh them backward to attend that which they know is their Duty. But such would doe well to remember & think upon that awfull Scripture, Mark. 8. 38. *Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father with the holy Angels.* Moreover, how many are there, that were born under the covenant, and as they grow up to years of discretion, doe not endeavour to prepare themselves to take hold on the Lords Covenant, but are (s) such that if they should be put upon renewing their Covenant, they would but profane the holy Covenant. Some of them are grosly ignorant, others of them are of a scandalous conversation, Drunkards, Swearers, Sabbath-breakers, disobedient to Parents, Lascivious, Theeves, Lyars. Should such whilst they so continue, be put upon mocking God, by saying they will be his Covenant Servants? No, but unto such wicked ones God saith, *what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy mouth?* Psal. 50. 16.

(s) Lege Breeri Scripta Anglicana, ubi de Confirmatione.

3. *They also fall under said Reproof from this Doctrine who are guilty of Covenant breaking.* And Oh! how many, that have cause to cry Guilty, Guilty before the Lord in this respect? without doubt, this is the cause of that bloudy Devastation that of late hath been in the midst of this Land. The people of *New-England* are (if any under heaven are so) a *Covenant-People*, But how have they transgressed the everlasting Covenant? And therefore hath the Lord been whetting his glittering Sword, and his hand hath taken hold on Judgment, he hath made his arrows drunk with bloud, and his Sword hath devoured Flesh. If the Covenant had been kept as we were bound to, all this had never

been. Wherefore the Lord hath ſaid, *I will bring a Sword upon you, that ſhall avenge the Quarrel of the Covenant.* Lev. 26. 25. Are not thouſands of the Children of the Church guilty of breaking the Covenant, in that they remember not their *Baptiſmal Vow?* They labour not to make themſelves a new heart; they ſtrive not with God in prayer, that he would beſtow the regenerating Grace of the Covenant upon their Souls. They make no conſcience to obſerve all things which are commanded by the Lord Jeſus, whereunto all baptized ones are ſolemnly ingaged. And as for thoſe that have been ever baptized into the Name of Chriſt, and yet ſhall walk looſly and profanely, God will judge them as Covenant breakers; and thoſe that are under the dreadfull and amazing guilt of *Sacramental Perjury*; Yea, & (t) their Baptiſme ſhall be brought in as a Witneſs againſt them at the laſt Day. Moreover, too many of thoſe that are in full Communion in our Churches, are juſtly chargeable with the guilt of Covenant breaking before the Lord. Certainly, we have many Church-Members, that have cauſe to judge themſelves, and lament before the Lord this day, in reſpect of their manifold breaches of Covenant. O when Profeſſors of Religion ſhall be of a vain Converſation, that one can ſee little difference in their ſpirits, in their Speeches, in their garb between them, and the Ruffians of the world; this is fearfull Covenant breaking. Yet is it not even thus? May we not ſay as ſometime the Lord by his Prophet ſpake, Mic. 2. 7. *O you that are named by the houſe of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord ſtraightned? are theſe his doings?* Is it come to that (ſaith the Lord) that my Spirit muſt not be at liberty to direct the Prophets to ſay any thing, but what you would have? Are ſuch Expreſſions and ſuch Actions of yours, fit doings for thoſe that are named the houſe of Jacob? There is ſcandalous Covetouſneſs, there is oppreſſion, there is unworthy reproaching of the Lords faithfull Meſſengers found amongſt you; and are theſe ſuch doings as doe become the Houſe of Jacob? So may we ſay to many amongſt us. Is ſuch a ſpirit ſuitable to a Church-Member? Are ſuch words and ſuch practices becoming a Profeſſor of the Goſpel? When men come into the Church they promiſe to walk with God; yet is there not many an one that

(t) *Qui indigne accipit Baptiſma, Judicium accipit.* Auguſt *contra* Fulgent. C. 6.

Mr. Perkins *in his Six Principles*, p. 34. *propounds this Queſtion. How if a man never keep the Condition to which he bound himſelf in Baptiſme? A. His Damnation ſhall be the greater becauſe he breaketh his Vow made to God.*

that hath walked no more closely with God since he came into the Church then he did before? they that are Fellow-Members in the same Church, are bound by their Covenant to watch over one anothers Souls, Was (u) not the neglect of due watchfulness over Achan the sin which the Church of Israel was guilty of? and they paid dear for that breach of Covenant. And how is Christian, Fraternal mutual Watchfulness neglected among us? Many carry it, as if they thought Cain were in the Right, when he said, *am I my Brothers Keeper?* The *Church Covenant* (which is also *the Lords Covenant*) binds men to walk not only with God but one with another, and therefore to love one another. Yet what scandalous Divisions have there been in many Churches? And hath not the Lord to punish this Violation of his Covenant, drawn the Sword against us? His Sheep have been so unnatural as to devour one another, and to separate and struggle one from another, therefore hath the Lord let loose wolves upon us all, that have made no difference.

(u) *See my Fathers Discourse of the Church Covenant.* p. 64.

USE 2. *Let it be a Word of Exhortation and encouragement to this work and Duty of renewing Covenant with the Lord.* I would apply it in special to you of this Congregation, who have had an holy purpose in your hearts this way, and therefore have set this day apart, that so you might humble your selves before the Lord on the account of former breaches of Covenant, and seek unto him by Fasting and Prayer, for the presence and assistance of his Spirit to be with you, in what concerns that solemn renewal of Covenant which is now before you. For your further quickning and encouragement, Consider,

1. *What a most blessed and desirable thing it is to be in Covenant with God.* Psal. 144, 15. *Happy is that people whose God is the Lord.* If you doe sincerely covenant with God, you shall never want any thing. They that have God to be theirs, have all; hence Jacob said to his Brother Esau, *I have all* (*) Gen. 33. 11. You are then sure of spiritual Blessings, pardon of Sin, Grace to persevere, eternal Life in heaven at last, which is therefore called *the Promise*, as being a special Branch of the Covenant. Heb. 10. 36. Yea and temporal Blessings also, so far as shall be good for you to enjoy them. For Godliness hath *the Promise of the Life that now is* as well as of that which is to come 1 Tim. 4. 8. Besides, it is a great honour and Dignity to be in Covenant with God. It was said of Samuel, that he was *an honourable man*, because

(*) כל־לי

(*) Moſt of the members of the ſecond Church in Boſton, when firſt Conſtituted were ſuch as did once belong to the Church in Dorchester.

becauſe a *Man of God* 1 Sam. 9. 5. To be the Servant of a great Prince, is counted an honour, what is it then to be the Covenant Servant of the great God? To be able to ſay as they did, Ezra 5. 11. *We are the Servants of the God of Heaven*, For this Reaſon the Children of Iſrael are ſaid to be a *great* People, yea the greateſt upon the Face of the Earth. Deut. 4. 6, 7. For poor creatures to be eſpouſed to the Lord, that God himſelf ſhould ſay to them *behold I am married to you*, what a glorious dignity is this? And as for you the Saints and Church of Chriſt in this place, God hath put honour upon you on other accounts, in that you have been a (*) Mother in Iſrael, other Congregations have iſſued from you, ſo now that you ſhould be among the firſt that doe ingage in this Renewal of your eſpouſals to the Lord Jeſus, God in his providence hath put an honour upon you in that reſpect, it is an honour to be the firſt in a good work.

Conſider, 2. *What cauſe there is to ſet about this work in good earneſt.* Have we not been under ſad diſtreſſes? and doe not the ſolemn Rebukes of God upon us call for ſolemn Renewal of Covenant? Of late there have been Burnings which the Lord hath kindled. At home there hath been Death, abroad the ſword hath bereaved. And ſhall we not *becauſe of all this make a ſure Covenant?* If otherwiſe, there is not ſo much of Hezekiahs ſpirit found amongſt us, as ought to be. For he could ſay, *Our Fathers have fallen by the Sword, our Sons, our Daughters, and our Wives are in Captivity, now it is in my heart to make a Covenant with the Lord God of Iſrael.* 2 Chron 29. 9. 10. Beſides all this, God holds the Sword in his hand ſtill. He hath not laid down his controverſie. Sometimes we hear Rumors as if wounded Chaldeans were like to riſe up, and diſtreſs this Land more then ever. We have cauſe to fear another Storm of wrath, ſeven times greater then the laſt, is yet impending, and not far of, if we doe not make haſte to take ſome effectual courſe to prevent it. There are things which I forbear to mention that look with an ominous aſpect upon poor New-England. All ſhould awaken us to this our duty. Furthermore, the iniquity which is found amongſt us, calls aloud hereunto. Our Backſlidings which are many teſtifie againſt us. There is a lamentable decay in New-England as to the power of Godlineſs. This Generation is far ſhort of the former. It was ſhewed but now, how the Covenant hath been tranſgreſſed Where is the Life of Diſcipline in our

Churches?

Churches? And as to the Children of the Covenant, the discipline of Christ almost totally neglected. And give me leave to say to you, that an Omission of that nature in you, hath more of evil in it, then in some others, because you have been abundantly instructed in Principles, & Truths of that kind, by your former blessed *Teacher*. I shall never forget what he said to me when upon his death-bed, about eight years agoe, namely, that *Care should be taken that the rising Generation be brought under the Government of Christ in his Church, & when grown up, & duly qualified that baptisme should not be withheld from their Children.* If then the Covenant hath not been duely observed, it ought to be renewed.

Consider. 3. *The good & benefit which will follow if this matter be duely attended.* That is the way to obtain answers of prayer: *When Israel vowed a vow unto the Lord, the Lord hearkened to the voice of Israel.* Numb. 21. 2, 3. Where do we read in Scripture, that the Servants of God have vowed as well as prayed, but eminent mercy hath followed? This is one way to divert impending wrath, therfore Hezekiah said, *it is in my heart to make a Covenant with the Lord, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us.* So in *Asa's* Time, after the Lords people had renewed their Covenant, it's said, *the Lord gave them rest round about.* Who is there but is willing that there should be rest round about, that enemies should be wholly subdued, and that the Land should rest from war? We see what in former generations hath procured dayes of tranquillity. Would we not have the dark clouds that threaten our All to be diverted? Let us then ingage to reform, & return to the Lord. I remember it is storied concerning a godly ArchBishop of *Magdeburg*, that when the Duke of Saxony intended to make war upon him, Hee resolved that he would endeavor a Reformation of the people & trust in God for his defence; The Duke secretly sent a spy to observe what strength & warlike preparations he could take notice of in his enemies countrey, the Spy returns, & informeth the Duke that he might easily overcome his enemy, for he made no preparations against him, only said, that he would endeavour to Reform what was amiss, and would pray, and trust in God for salvation. *Nay then* (said the Duke) *the Divel shall make war against him, if he will, for all mee*; I will never go fight against such a man as that is. Truly for us to Reform, yea, for us to covenant and ingage to the Lord, that wee will Reform the evils that have provoked the eyes of his glory, is the best way in the world

(w) *Referante* Buchlcero.

to cauſe deſigns which may be againſt us to prove abortive. Yea, this is the way to obtain Bleſſings from the Lord as formerly. To have Blaſtings, Droughts, and the like Judgments, which have a long time afflicted us, to be in mercy removed. See to this purpoſe *Zach.8.8. they ſhall be my People, and I will be their God.* that is, in other words, they ſhall renew their Covenant; And what followeth? It is ſaid *v.10.* that there had been ſuch times as that *there was no hire for man nor for beaſt, neither any peace to him that went out, or came in.* So hath it been with us. Well, but ſee further, *v.11, 12.* after they had returned to the Lord, and ingaged themſelves to him anew, to walk as became his people, *now* (ſaith the Lord) *the ſeed ſhall be proſperous, the vine ſhall give her fruit, and the ground ſhall give her increaſe, and the heavens ſhall give their dew.* If then we do return to the Lord in this way, He will beſtow temporal Bleſſings upon us (ſo far as ſhall be good for us) or if not, greater mercyes in ſtead therof. And I would not wholly forbear to mention here, that the Lord hath lately and ſignally owned this work of renewing Covenant amongſt our Brethren in the Churches of the neighbour Colony. From that very day they met with nothing but wonderfull Succeſſes in their ingagements againſt the enemy.

The Churches in Plimouth Colony renewed their Covenant in the latter end of the 4. Month 1676. and ever ſince that the Heathen in their parts have fallen.

By way of Direction,

1. *In renewing Covenant with God, ſpecial Sins ſhould be confeſſed, and Reformation thereof ſolemnly ingaged.* The ſins of the Times, or the Place where we live, ſuch as the Lord may have any ſpecial controverſy for; theſe ſhould be ingaged againſt. This we ſee in the Context; this people was guilty of much Senſuality, and therefore they promiſed to the Lord to become a reformed people in that reſpect, Neh.10.30. The Sabbath had not been obſerved with that ſtrictneſs and Conſcience that ſhould have been, wherefore they ingage Reformation as to that evill alſo. Yea and that they would endeavour to keep themſelves pure from the ſins of other men. *v.31.* They had been guilty of ſins of omiſſion, and thence Covenant to endeavour Reformation. There was a ſpirit of Worldlineſs prevailing amongſt them, diſcovering it ſelf in ſtraight-handedneſs, as to matters that did concern the maintenance of the publick worſhip of God amongſt them, on which accounts they faithfully promiſed as before the Lord, to be more liberal for the future.

2. *In*

2. *In Covenanting give up your Children as well as your ſelves to God in Jeſus Chriſt.* As for the Children that are come to years of underſtanding, and fit for ſuch a work, they ought with their own mouthes to ingage ſubjection to the Lord; for ſo it was when this people renewed their Covenant, their ſons and their daughters, every one having Knowledge, ſeparated themſelves unto the Law of God. *Chap.* 10. *v.*28. And as for ſuch as are in Minority, their Parents ought to act for them. Beware how you exclude your poor Children out of the Covenant. For that would lay a fatal corner ſtone of Anabaptiſme, a Weed which God never planted, nor ever watered it to this day. Yea it would lay a deep foundation of wofull apoſtacy from God, witneſs that Scripture, Joſh. 22. 24, 25. *If in time to come your Children ſhould ſpeak unto our Children, ſaying, what have you to doe with the Lord God of Iſrael, ye have no part in the Lord, ſo ſhall your children make our children ceaſe from fearing the Lord.* To deny them all intereſt in the Covenant, is the way to make them ceaſe from fearing the Lord. Remember, that when the ſecond Generation, of them that came out of Egypt, renewed their Covenant with the Lord, it is expreſly ſaid, not only that they themſelves, but that their *little ones* alſo did *enter into Covenant.* Deut. 29. 11. 12. And one of the great Lights of New-England (*) hath judiciouſly obſerved, that when it is ſaid of thoſe Converts in the Acts that they were *added to the Church*, and *added to the Lord*, it doth imply that they confeſſed their ſins, and became Diſciples and followers of the Apoſtles Doctrine, and ſo inged themſelves, and *Covenanted alſo for their Children*, to follow the truth of the Goſpel. We know (my Brethren) what Pharaoh did yield unto, *goe now ye that are men and ſerve the Lord*, but as for your *little ones*, not ſo, they ſhall not be ingaged to ſerve God with you. Let not any of us be like unto him, It is recorded in the New-Teſtament, concerning the Chriſtians at Tyre, that not only the men, but alſo their wives, yea and their Children (children are expreſſly mentioned) manifeſted their affection to the Miniſtry, and worſhipped the Lord together. Act. 21. 5. And was the Lord Jeſus ever more moved with an holy indignation at his own Diſciples, then at that time, when out of a perverſe zeal, and ſinfull ſcrupuloſity, they would have witheld little children from him? Men are not aware how much they diſpleaſe Chriſt by ſuch a ſpirit, and by practices according thereunto.

(*) *Mr. Hooker in Survey of Diſcipl. 2. 7. P. 76.*

3. *Be ſure that when you enter into Covenant with the Lord, you be ſincere and hearty in what you doe.* For the Lord ſearcheth all hearts, and underſtandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; therefore ſerve him, & ingage your ſelves to him with a perfect heart and a willing mind. It is not enough for us to promiſe with our Lips, or with our hands to write a Covenant, but our hearts, yea our whole heart muſt be His. 2 Chron. 15.12. *They entred into a Covenant to ſeek the Lord God of their Fathers, with all their heart, and with all their Soul,* So v.15. *They had ſworn with all their heart, and ſought him with their whole deſire, and he was found of them.* Thus Joſiah when he promoted this work of renewing the Covenant, he did it *with all his heart,* 2 Chron. 34 31. Though the people many of them, were not ſincere in what they did, which is the cauſe of that complaint of the Prophet Jeremiah who lived in thoſe dayes, Jer. 3.10. *Judah hath not turned to me with her whole heart, but feignedly ſaith the Lord.* Alas, the Body of the people, notwithſtanding their outward covenanting and reforming, had Idols ſet up in their hearts ſtill. O let it not be ſo with us. After renewal of Covenant, let not your hearts goe after their covetouſneſs.

Therefore, 4. *Keep Covenant with the Lord,* let it be a *ſure Covinant.* Jer 50.5. *come let us joyn our ſelves to the Lord in a perpetual Covenant which ſhall not be forgotten.* It were better not to Covenant, then not to make Conſcience of keeping Covenant when we have done. Therefore Solomon ſaith, *Better it is thou ſhouldſt not vow, then that thou ſhouldſt vow and not pay.* Eccleſ. 5 5. Covenanting without Conſcience to perform, will bring a heavy curſe at laſt. Therefore in the context it is ſaid of this people, that *they entred into a Curſe,* becauſe if there were not care and conſcience to obſerve the Covenant, they made themſelves liable to the curſe and wrath of an holy God. It is a dreadfull thing to ſin after ſolemn renewal of Covenant. Thence it is a fearfull thing for men to ſin after they have been at a Sacrament, or after a day of Humiliation, Becauſe this is to break Covenant with God. Much more is it a deſperate provocation to the eyes of his Glory, for men to ſin as formerly, after the moſt ſolemn renewals of Covenant. *Luther* ſpeaks (y) of a gracious woman, that when tempted by Satan, would anſwer him, *Satan I may not doe it, for I am baptized.* So if after you have anew ingaged your ſelves to the Lord, Satan ſhould tempt you to

(y) See Mr. Mayhews Serm. 1. Pet. 3.21 p. 61

to this or that which is diſpleaſing in the ſight of God, Anſwer, I may not give way to ſuch a temptation, for I have renewed my Covenant. If tempted to pride and vanity in that reſpect, ſay, I may not give way to ſuch a thing, for I have renewed my Covenant. If tempted to ſenſuality and worldlineſs, ſay, I may not hearken to thoſe allurements, for I have renewed my Covenant.

And what ſhall we doe that we may keep Covenant?

Anſw. 5. *Whatever you doe, doe all in the Name of Chriſt.* Look unto Jeſus for help and Grace. Goe to him for pardon of all former breaches of Covenant, that his blood (which is the blood of the everlaſting Covenant) may be ſprinkled upon your ſouls. Without him you cannot renew your Covenant aright, nor keep it when you have done, *Without me* (ſaid Chriſt to his Diſciples) *you can do nothing.* Joh. 15. 5. But through the grace and ſtrength of Chriſt, you may doe all things. Be ſtrong then in the Grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus. Goe on in his Name and fear, humbly depending on him for the ſupplyes of his Spirit. And I beſeech God, that the Grace of the Lord Jeſus may be with you.

Tibi Domine,